(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether it is a fact that despite being one of the biggest Railways of the world, Indian Railways is more expensive than those of America and China; and

(d) if so, the facts in this regard and Government's plan to make Indian Railways competitive at international level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Indian Railways continue to strive for excellence as a principle mode of transportation of goods and passenger. Various initiatives have been taken to make the Railways competitive by way of improved productivity, induction of new technology, managerial and marketing efforts.

(c) and (d) Each railway system has its own structure (Government or Private ownership), clientele (passenger or freight) and support systems. There is no single, common defined parameter for judging the competitiveness across different railways systems in the world.

Private investment in Railways

592. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railways propose to revise siding rules to encourage private investment in construction, up gradation and its efficient utilization;

(b) if so, whether a Task Force has been set up for the purpose;

(c) whether it has submitted the report; and

(d) if so, the salient recommendations thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R.VELU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.